

## AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

## LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (canceled)

2. (currently amended) A method according to claim 6 ~~8~~, wherein the strengthening rings are shrink-fitted around the gear wheel in such manner that the strengthening rings ~~will be~~ are firmly shrunk onto the gear wheel with a material-technical tensile/compressive strength within 80% of the 0.2% elastic elongation range of the material.

3. (currently amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein during the shrink fitting process the toothed rim of the driving gear is ~~envisaged~~ stretched out to a correspondingly larger circle having a predetermined dimension.

4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) A gear wheel according to claim 4 ~~7~~, wherein the strengthening rings are shrink-fitted in such manner that the strengthening rings ~~will be~~ are firmly shrunk onto the gear wheel with a material-technical tensile/compressive strength within 80% of the 0.2% elastic elongation range of the material.

6. (canceled)

7. (new) A gear wheel defining a center axis and comprising generally radially outwardly projecting circumferentially spaced gear teeth and two strengthening rings extending around the gear teeth in coaxial surrounding relationship thereto at axially spaced locations along the gear teeth, the strengthening rings being fitted radially against the gear teeth, each strengthening ring including generally radially inwardly projecting ring teeth in meshing contact with the gear teeth.

8. (new) A method for strengthening a gear wheel that defines a center axis, the method comprising placing two strengthening rings in coaxial surrounding relationship to radially outwardly projecting circumferentially spaced gear teeth of the gear wheel, wherein the rings are axially spaced along the gear teeth, and fitting the strengthening rings radially against the gear teeth to bring inwardly projecting ring teeth of each strengthening ring into meshing contact with the gear teeth.